

Child Education is Previous to Schooling

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Abstract

Child development is driven by the inside force that genetics provide with the highest wisdom. Then education should come following the patterns of the real child development, and there is an ideal period of time to shape education following those natural patterns: zero to six years of age. No schooling of any kind can fit with the real needs of the child during that period of time.

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Parents and the society highest qualified persons as educators (no teachers) are the professionals who are needed to do the most important job in our society: Education of children (0 - 6 years), before any type of schooling.

“From birth the child makes triangle with the world and the person next to him who loves and cares, that is the way he learns” Catherine L’Ecuyer [1].

For babies the world is a gift, it comes unexpectedly, everything surprises them, they are astonished by the world and everything they discover in it. Astonishment is baby’s natural condition facing the whole reality. That condition opens his mind, and then it happens that, as the neurosciences has proved, the right brain hemisphere is developing first with its highest pick around four years of age, long before the left hemisphere reaches its functional ability.

Happily we know that the main function of the right hemisphere is to connect with our sense of BEING. To be is first, then it may come the reasonable doing. During those infant years children need that we reinforce the processes: WHO is he/she becoming, WHAT does he/she feel when exploring, HOW is integrating the surrounding reality. What matters is the process, not results.

Through the child windows (senses) the world comes in fiercely and invades the brain to move it so that it gets multiply because needs to give rains to all the impulses that activate his being. All sensations would be very short if, at the same time, there is not an expansion-openness of the brain that develops the bubble in the limbic system: the emotional bubble well shaped by the persons who are his references, parents and educators.

The interaction patterns between parents/caregivers and the child is, by far, more important than sensory stimulation for the child development. “Interpersonal interaction and cooperation is the key to healthy development”, says the international expert on neuroscience JD Siegel (2001).

The astonishment impulse is born with the baby but its best effects happen in the emotional interaction with the persons who mediate between the world and the child. “You should not care when your children do not listen to you, they observe you all the time”, it was the wisdom of Theresa of Calcuta.

That child’s inner impulse, the essential engine of the human being, is something intangible, but as real as the lungs or the heart. Something technological instruments can no detect just because it is intangible reality, “the invisible father” as it is called by Dr Melodie de Jager. Spirit, intellect, energy or soul, any way we want to call it; it is shared by parents and educators [2].

To stress on reading, writing and arithmetic before 6 - 7 years of age, is more harmful than helpful for those shaping brains. Very often the result is what we call “learned stupidity”, a condition that makes the child believe he/she is incapable and then loses the natural learning desire. It is one of the main causes of school failure, of learning difficulties and the school avoidance, as well as maths rejection

and many other upsets for many children with normal and even high capability. They have lost the astonishment that the world and its reality instill on them.

The Hippocratic Oath says: "first, do no harm". Today that oath is defended by the top specialists, is endorsed by numerous and well documented experiments, and by the real common sense that tells us with tiresome insistence. But against this basic principle stand the whole techno-social and pseudo-progress system: TV, smart-phones, tablets, videos, webs, infant schooling, etc. that -very often - try to transform children into little-adults, adaptable to our pathologies = "learned stupidity".

That is the terrible problem we are originating to many of our children.

What can we do?

Children need to develop before going to school -be it infant school or whatever, it is school. We claim for educational settings, far from school paradigm. Settings where children are accompanied in their development, and that is infant education, no school "education" = teaching.

Children are children and they have the right to their childhood as long as it lasts. We should not try to make adults before their time, they are not unfinished and imperfect adults. The main difference is that their left brain hemisphere is not yet fully developed on its functional dimension, nor their eyes; so, flooding their senses and their minds turn children cynical, and cynicism is sticky, hard to detach and impossible to satisfy.

Once again JD Siegel recommends: "A normal environment, little amount of added stimulus since the natural world has plenty of them". "Children are protagonists of their own learning", used to say Montessori. Each child -by setting - comes with the inner engine (the invisible father) that, by itself, discovers the astonishment. Our best contribution is to be there with him on this wonderful adventure and "making it easy through a deep consideration of what the nature of childhood demands, that is: A total respect for his innocence, his rhythms, his processes, his sense of mystery and his thirst for beauty". That's the huge lesson from Catherin L'Ecuyer [1].

The quality of education can't be measured by the number nor the dimension of the stimulus, but by the normal caring presence offered while the child discovers his BEING, WHO is he becoming and HOW the feelings through discovery are helping to integrate reality. Play is the highest means for children to attain it, no school teaching.

The tragedy of our children is the wrecking of childhood on behalf of too early schooling, too much and before time technology and the society making a world only for adults.

Parents and educators, we should do our best to protect children against that institutionalized tragedy. It is time for pediatrician, psychology and psychiatry specialists to speak out, not to be silent. Children are no schoolchildren until they are ready to be so, and ready means to have the neurodevelopment needed to work with abstract symbols that school uses for the conventional learning; the natural learning do not need but reality and educators (no teachers) who should be the best prepared specialists of the society workforce.

Education is not equivalent to schooling or learning through teaching. Education is fostering natural development while sharing the very own and the world around with other persons in the most loving and caring way humans can do.

We need to enlighten politicians, lawmakers and the whole of society so that they can understand that education is the highest priority of society, the most needed of highly qualify specialists, the presence of active and well backed up parents and the support of the citizenship.

"The most glorious pages of history were written on times when men were bold enough to work together to avoid tragedy. With your actions and your words you can also enlighten pages of history", Haile Selassie.

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